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Mercy for the Fallen.

TWO SERMONS

IN AID OF THE

HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER,

BY THE

REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A.,

RECTOR OF CLEWER, BERKS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

An Appeal for the Completion of the House.

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S E R M O N I.

2 COR. v. 21.

“ HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US WHO KNEW NO SIN, THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

THAT the SON of GOD, abiding still, as from everlasting, in His pure, unapproachable GOD-head, was made Man, binding the two natures indissolubly together in His one Person, being as truly Man as He is truly God, is the simplest view of the Incarnation. A yet farther depth of the mystery is, that the created nature which He assumed was sinful, though as He took it, He cleansed it for Himself; and thus, Himself sinless, He became subject to the extremest penalties of sin.

The words of the text,—words which appal us, as we utter them; which, but for the seal of Revelation, we could not have applied to Him,—“ He hath made Him to be SIN,” are generally understood to mean that He became a sin-offering. But this interpretation can by no means be intended to limit the application of the words of Scripture to the sacrifice of His Death, as if this could exhaust their deep meaning. His whole earthly life was, in truth, a sin-offering. His

submission to the presence, the shame, and the penalties of sin, was a prolonged sacrifice, commencing from the very hour when He "was made Flesh, and dwelt among us."

Even before His Incarnation, the shadows of the coming sacrifice had been cast forward upon Him, for the stains upon a man's lineage fall upon himself. Not merely did the nature, which He took to cleanse it, bear in it the accumulated impurities of ages, in an ever-increasing deterioration after the first fall, but even the chosen line, through which He came, bore upon it aggravated stains of sin. When the first Evangelist traces the lineage of the MESSIAH, he is careful to note,—as facts important to recall, though but for such a cause our better feelings ever seek to veil the dishonour of our parentage,—the more than ordinary stains of sin that marked some members of the chosen family. Recording how "Juda begat Pharez and Zara," he states specially that it was "of Tamar."¹ Recording how "Salmon begat Boaz," he adds, "of Rahab,"² elsewhere known as "the harlot."³ And mentioning one of the choicest names of the sacred line, "David the king," he reminds us how he "begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias."⁴

And after His Birth, the necessities of the fallen nature into which He had entered, pursued Him to the end. The subjection in which He was held was set forth in symbolical ordinances which He condescended to receive in His own Person. Thus on the eighth day He was 'circumcised, as though His Flesh needed to be mortified. Thus, His Blessed Mother was purified, as though she had contracted defilement

¹ S. Matt. i. 3.

² S. Matt. i. 5.

³ Heb. xi. 31.

⁴ S. Matt. i. 6.

from the bringing forth of the sinless One. Again, entering on His ministry He was baptized, as though He needed the mystical washing away of sin.

This truth, moreover, is still more wonderfully seen in the personal experience of the power of sin, which by some mysterious necessity He was constrained to learn. For to this end He passed through the Forty Days' Temptation, that by an actual consciousness He might know the hatefulness and power of sin; being "in all points tempted like as we are." And again, when He was bowed to the earth in Gethsemane, and His convulsed frame gave forth the Bloody Sweat, what must have been the burden of sin, past, present, and to come, which penetrated His inmost soul!

So likewise when He mingled among mankind, sharing all the vicissitudes and needs of our daily life, His close fellowship with sin was so publicly manifested, that to the Pharisees it appeared an unanswerable condemnation of His claims, and became their fatal stumblingblock. "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" The act of such near intimacy with the unclean, such fellowship as the sharing of a common meal betokened, and this as His habitual practice, startled and perplexed the world. How could the pure Deity be associated with a defiled humanity? How could One Who claimed no lower place than co-equality with the Everlasting FATHER, choose as His companions the very outcasts of the fallen?

On the other hand this same truth is manifested, though with very opposite consequences, in the effects produced upon the children of affliction, who were

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

² S. Matt. ix. 11.

drawn to seek Him. When the excommunicated leper—the special type of spiritual uncleanness—in his solitary wanderings along the byways of Galilee, felt the spring of hope, watching for the Deliverer to cross even *his* path of sorrow, and pity him, how notorious must have been the sympathy existing between Him and the lost sinner ! With what power must the thrilling tidings have spread, when even “ the sinner from the city ” could dare to creep out of her dark haunts into the very chamber where He sat at meat, and kiss His feet !

It is in wonderful accordance with all these circumstances, that S. Paul uses the words of the text, and they combine to prove, what has been observed, that these words imply, not merely that He came to atone by suffering, but that by an intimate Presence He entered into the very depths of the evil which He came to destroy ; incapable of the least shadow of impurity derived from it, but not incapable of the closest association with it.

An irreversible law rules our race, that of ourselves we cannot revive, when fallen. Once corrupted, our nature has no power of self-restoration. Even Almighty Power can lay hold of nothing within itself to rescue it. The Creator can find in it no element of regeneration. Its Source of Life is from without, and the renewal of that life can only be from without also. He Who first gave, can alone restore the lost gift. Further, there is this difference between the original and the restored gift ; that whereas God gave, as a gift out of Himself, breathing it into our nostrils, the breath of life, in the restoration of what was lost, it is not any gift from Himself that sufficeth for our need ; but Himself is the gift ; Himself becomes the

new Life. "The SECOND MAN is the LORD from Heaven."¹ It is not a new creation taking the place of the old ; but the Creator Himself is the New Creation. "In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men ; and the Light shineth in darkness." His own undying Life prevails over the death of ours. The righteousness of our nature once lost is for ever lost. It is not the old righteousness requickened ; but "the Righteousness of God in Him" which takes its place. Our corruption can pass away only before His Presence, "Who knew no sin ;" and our restoration can be accomplished only as that Presence reforms the corruptible into His own incorruption. The fact of sin once entering into the nature, renders it for ever incapable of again reviving and returning unto God. He only Who could "see no corruption," can restore it by combining it with Himself. He only Who "knew no sin," can quicken it afresh from the dead, by the Divine Nature entering in and uniting Itself in some deep mystery with the fallen nature. Even as God entered into death, and 'was prostrate under His enemy the hour He overwhelmed him, the Conqueror chained and bleeding beneath the foe He destroyed ;' so He entered into sin, complying with all its penalties, clothing Himself with its garments, enduring all its misery, and thus, even as He yielded Himself, annihilated the power in whose grasp He was bound, transforming into His own Image, as He touched it at every point, the corruption which was causing Him all His agony. It is no more, therefore, "I that live ; but"—Another had passed within him and possessed him, and became his truer self,—“CHRIST LIVETH IN ME : and the life which I now live in the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 47.

flesh, I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”¹

It was the consciousness of this, however dimly perceived; the consciousness that, with the mysterious Stranger Who had appeared in the Flesh, there was sympathy with the inward groanings of every sinner’s lot, and power by an intimate communion to heal the fountain-head of sin within, that drew around Him the first company of penitents, which was to increase as His Presence spread among all nations, gathering to Himself everywhere all those whose troubled hearts, “groaning and travailing with pain together” under the “bondage of corruption,” waited “for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.”

In contemplating the change which passed over human nature, as GOD entered within it, imparting to it His own righteousness in Himself in the place of its own sinfulness, the differences between one sin and another fade away. In contrast with the outgoings of His transcendent love they are inappreciable. As we rise to contemplate the SON of GOD crossing the gulph which separates the all-holy Godhead from sinful humanity, degrees of sin in the creature so infinitely blessed, are lost to the sight. Certainly the hard distinctions which the conventionalities of society have drawn, can have no place here. As there can be no limit to the sympathy with which His sacred Heart yearned towards the fallen, or to His power in restoring them, there can be no ground for excluding from the range of our compassion, or the possibilities of complete renovation, any even of the deadliest sins.

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

Yet such exclusion has been made in the case which we are now specially considering; for though fallen woman has not sinned alone, how entirely in the world's eye has the undivided burden of guilt fallen upon her! While the partners of her sin pass in and out among us, unnoticed, save by the sleepless Eye of God; on her has lain the blight of a hopeless excommunication. Even the Church has failed in its love towards her. The ministrings of the Son of Man have through us been straitened in her case. This is said deliberately; for though some Penitentiaries have long since been established amongst us, it has not been by the direct action of the Church, nor has the love and self-devotedness of the Gospel in their highest forms animated the work. It is not meant to disparage what has been done, whether within the Church, though in a different spirit and on a different plan from what we should have desired, or even without the Church, to stem the tide of impurity, yet considering the general tone of feeling, the want of sympathy and earnestness, and the inertness and barrenness of the Church itself, we must acknowledge that a debt, as yet unredeemed, is owed towards the many thousands, who, as beings already enveloped in the darkness of a lower world, people your midnight streets.¹

And what renders this neglect the more inexcusable, is that whilst our LORD's love in seeking to save the lost, knew no respect of persons, in no instance has His dealing with penitents been recorded with such minuteness and fulness of detail, as in the case of fallen woman. Whatever be the cause,—whether it

¹ The substance of this Sermon was preached in London, at Christ Church, S. Pancras.

were because fallen woman was doomed to bear the unmitigated scorn of the world,—or that her sin, involving the ruin both of body and soul, is most completely at variance with the righteousness of the Spirit which He came to infuse into our nature,—or that the violation of the sanctity of marriage—the “great mystery,”¹ given in the days of man’s innocence, symbolizing the Incarnation, and the mystical union which is betwixt CHRIST and His Church,—is so fatal a sacrilege, and spreads the widest misery throughout the human family, destroying its holiest natural ties,—and therefore that this sin, because of its exceeding deadliness, needed a special assurance of pardon, and became the fittest instance of the inexhaustible powers of the Atonement,—whatever the cause be, we have certainly no such records of His healing and consoling love, as He manifested towards these lost ones of His Fold.

For, let us trace briefly the wonderful details we possess of His personal intercourse with such members of this lost class as were, through His grace, drawn to Him. First, He shields the penitent from the scorn which has ever dogged her path, rebuking the world around that would have heaped upon her head the extreme malediction of the Law: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”² Then He breathes into her soul the peace of His healing absolution. “Neither do I condemn thee.” And then He acknowledges in her the reality of a will and a power (His own merciful gifts,) to overcome all remaining passions,—“Go, and sin no more.”

Again, dealing with another, one of a darker con-

¹ Eph. v. 32. See the First Exhortation in the Marriage Service.

² S. John viii. 7.

science, He first seeks to stir her soul to confession and a sense of guilt, awakening her to the comprehension of the extent of her sin. "JESUS saith to her, Go, call thy husband and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. JESUS said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband ; in that sayest thou truly."¹ Then varying His appeal, as His words were lost upon her, and still long-suffering towards one as yet incapable, as it seemed, of being aroused to a sense of sin, He seeks another entrance into her soul, opening before her, in allusion to a question she herself had raised, the view of a pure, deep bliss, in communion with the Eternal FATHER through the Spirit, now within reach of her, and of all the children of her people. "JESUS saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the FATHER. . . . the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in Spirit and in truth, for the FATHER *seeketh* such to worship Him."

Again, in a third and yet different case, one whose soul had been deeply stirred, and whose sore anguish had issued in an entire devotion, how touchingly tender and encouraging are His words as He disclosed to the world the great gift of love which He had shed upon her. "And He turned unto the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou

¹ S. John iv. 18.

didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”¹

It is in the convictions which such passages of the Word of God inspire, that the House of Mercy has been formed. And this work has grown far beyond our own borders ; for within this vast city it has been taken up by many kindred hearts. And where more fitly should such help be given than here ? For who can think without shuddering of the revelations of wickedness which are here spread out beneath the eye of Heaven, side by side with all that art, or wealth, or power of intellect can produce ; horrible profligacies separated by but a thin partition from all that is most beautiful and illustrious in the world ! No sooner does evening close upon her streets, than one can scarcely venture forth without meeting almost at every turn what must sadden his inmost heart : no watchful parent but must feel anxiety for his child whom necessity may call forth from home amidst such danger.

Is there not here a call for very earnest efforts ? For of these many thousands of lost ones wandering in the midst of us, none can be saved without some means, such as we seek to offer. Between them and hope, whether for this world or the next, there is a great gulf fixed, across which no effort of their own can ever enable them to pass. They can find “ no place for repentance,” though they seek it “ carefully, with tears,” except through the mercy of others. They are the very children of despair.

And yet the cause of their fall may have been a train of circumstances in which *their* blame was less than

¹ S. Luke vii. 44—47.

that of others. They may have been the innocent victims before they became the tempters. Not one of them, perhaps, but would have shrunk back from what they now are, could they have seen the end of their early faults ; many, perhaps, would have never fallen, had the voice of warning come in time,—had the care of a true home, or of the Church, been around them in timely season. And that there are many who, whatever be the entanglements around them now, would arise and bless us for such mercy, as in the days when the first graces of the Gospel opened on the world, is evident by the many applications made, which by no existing means can be met.

When the SON of GOD, “Who knew no sin,” to Whose pure Humanity its presence must have been a perpetual agony, passed through the cities and highways of Judæa and Galilee, and His eyes rested on the forms of sin that moved around Him, how did His sacred Heart yearn, and how great was the self-sacrifice through which He sought to overcome the malignity of the evil, and to draw its victims “out of darkness into His marvellous light, and from the power of Satan unto God !” He has now passed within the veil, and is hidden ; but His Presence is among us, and His Image lives in our hearts and we are His ; and we are to be, as He was, in this world.

He still speaks through us, and His Hand is stretched out through our ministrings to save and to heal. The travail of His soul is to be satisfied in the toil and love of His Church, which must still ever bear “the marks of the LORD JESUS.” Should we not then look around us with His Eyes of pure compassion, and following Him at however great a distance, still in His Spirit of self-devotedness, seek to deliver, and if need

be, "compel to come in," those whom His voice is calling, even now, "in the streets and lanes of the city," and in the "highways and hedges" of our land?

Let it then be our earnest prayer that our hearts may be enlarged, and the gift of the love of CHRIST be stirred within us, that in the spirit and power of His love we may accomplish what He hath given us to do, and seek by His grace to gather in these lost ones, whose misery, degradation, and shame perpetually cry out to us for mercy, that we may work together with Him, their Redeemer, for their deliverance, that so with Him we may rejoice in the final gathering of all whom He will save in His day; to Whom with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, &c.

SERMON II.

S. JOHN XIX. 25.

“NOW THERE STOOD BY THE CROSS OF JESUS HIS MOTHER,
AND HIS MOTHER’S SISTER, MARY THE WIFE OF CLEOPHAS,
AND MARY MAGDALENE.”

THE text mentions three persons who, at the latter period of the Crucifixion, stood near the Cross. The following verse speaks of a fourth,—“When JESUS therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved.” Four there were in all, who saw His last pang, and watched His dying look; the blessed Virgin Mother, Mary her sister, Mary Magdalene, and S. John the beloved Apostle. Though brought thus closely together, they were persons very different one from another, in character, in preparations of heart, and in manner of life.

In the Mother of our LORD we see the image of Virgin purity. She was one who from infancy had grown in a retired home, in a sweet humility, in gentleness, in submission, in innocence, so far as was ever given to a child of Eve, (One only excepted) blessed among women, honoured of Angels, and highly favoured of God. She was the pattern of all those who, in their several degrees, nurtured in Christian homes, and shielded from the impurities of the world,

have never fallen away from their first grace, ever drawing nearer to the perfect vision of God.

S. John is the image of faithful love. He was one who had grown up in the world, in common labour, amidst the ordinary trials of life, in a fisher's calling, and from that world, and all its gains, and all its pleasures, had turned at the first call to follow the LORD, and in following Him, had learnt to rule his life and quiet his too passionate soul, as he gazed with a still, deep love on the Countenance of his Master, and from His bosom whereon he lay, drank in the streams of light and love, through which he became ever purer, more gentle, more divine. He is the forerunner of all those who in the midst of the world are yet weaned from it more and more, as the call of God comes upon them, and follow His will, as their eyes are opened to see, and by degrees are absorbed in the pervading consciousness of His most blissful love.

We pass over the third, Mary, the Virgin Mother's sister, scarcely known to us except by name. There is yet a fourth, standing by the Cross, near as the others, Mary Magdalene. She had been known in early life by a far different course from that of her companions, by a notoriety which has clung to her name through all ages. She is known as "the sinner from the city;" so unclean that seven devils had entered into her. But she had learnt to loathe her sin, and had knelt at the feet of JESUS, washing them with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head, once the snares of accursed love, but now offered to Him Who in mercy had drawn her to Himself, to love Him only. She had heard Him pronounce her forgiveness, and from that hour had cleaved to Him as the life and joy of her soul, and followed, minister-

ing to Him of her substance. She is the pattern of all those who, having fallen and become dead in trespasses and sins, have heard in the depth of their souls the voice of God calling them, and have torn themselves from all the entanglements in which they were bound, and sought a perfect cleansing through His redeeming love in following His holy ways, giving themselves, and all they have, to Him.

These three stood near the Cross, types of that innumerable company to be gathered in from all corners of the earth to meet before the Throne. One all purity, who had borne Him in her womb. One all love, who had lain on His breast at supper. One all sorrow, who had pierced Him with her sins. And all together now in Him gathered into one fellowship. The Cross has alike drawn hearts so different, and alike cleansed all. Even the sins which had been as scarlet have been made white as snow. The sinner in her penitence is cleansed, and in her cleansing stands beside the purest of her sisters. "The pure in heart shall see God," as is given to none other; but none of the virtues of the Cross and Passion of the SON of God are withheld from the penitent.

Often indeed there is given to these last an earnestness of grace which seems beyond that of all others. All the three Marys carried the sacred Body to the tomb, but when the Virgin returned to the city, and all was silent, and hope was gone, the Penitent remained watching. "There was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre."¹ All the three again went to the tomb early in the morning when the Sabbath was past, carrying sweet spices to anoint Him; but when the others had retired in de-

¹ S. Matt. xxvii. 61.

spair of finding Him, the Magdalene alone remained, in tears, still seeking Him.

And as there are depths of earnestness and love developed in the souls of those who in the bitterness of their remorse have known the mercies of CHRIST, so are there gifts of consolation, unrevealed to others, reserved for them alone. Our LORD showed Himself alive first to the Magdalene, next to S. Peter, both fallen, both penitents. The first entrance into Paradise, the passage thither even by His side, was the blessing of a Penitent. The first sound of His voice, when He had risen from the dead, and the promise that, when He had ascended, He should be touched with a closer touch than was ever known before, was the unspeakable joy of the Magdalene.

And if to all who have fallen, and after their long wanderings would return, there is mercy, and through that mercy a perfect cleansing, and the vision of God, can we suppose that the one class of penitents who are more especially represented by the Magdalene, shall fail to find their place beneath the Cross. If the Eternal did not scorn, though the leper scorned, the sinner from the city, but gave His feet to be kissed, and blessed her love, for "she loved much," can we think that now in the fulness of His perfected atonement, He will reject any one who comes forth from her hiding place of shame in the city or the village, to find rest in Him? If when many, even leaders and teachers of the people, had condemned the sinner taken in the very act, He nevertheless shielded her from scorn and death, and would give her her season of grace in peace, can we doubt that His will now must be, that every one, however defiled, should have a refuge and a home, and hope of restora-

tion to the favour of God and man? We believe then that the will of God is clear, that such penitents should not be driven back into the depths of the dark waters, but rather should be sought out, if haply the strivings of the Spirit may draw one or another unto Him Who still waiteth to be gracious.

There are moreover special reasons why such sinners have a very touching claim on our pity and our aid. Does it not move you to think that the sinful woman has to bear a burden from which man the partner of her guilt is free? He returns from his sin and no outward change has passed over him. In the eye of the world he is as though he had sinned not. How different are the consequences to *her*. She must forfeit home and becomes the outcast. She loses the hope of ever again eating the bread of honesty. A gulph opens before her, which no remorse, no toil, no restitution can ever enable her to cross. From very necessity she sins on; from the very cravings of hunger, though she loathe it, must still return to it, must die in it, if death overtake her. No door opens to receive her as a servant; no trade admits her as a sharer of its toil. There is no despair on earth like that which comes over the soul of the fallen woman, when sin has become an abomination to her, and yet her perpetual uncleanness is the only source of her daily bread. Her hell is begun; within her shame, tribulation, and terror; without her scorn, and darkness and a laughter in which devils may well be thought to join.

Or if the darkness be unfelt, and the inward horror be as yet unrevealed to the soul, yet even still more is to be mourned that spiritual death which tends ever onward, though unconsciously, yet rapidly and surely, to its own place and final doom.

It should moreover move us to think, that all this misery may have arisen from causes to which the poor alone are subject. For their children suffer, in a manner unknown to others, from exposure, from too close contact in cottages with insufficient space to separate the sexes, and preserve the veil even of common decency ; from too great familiarity in the times of labour, in the field where all ages and both sexes mingle without restraint, or the workroom with its close and long continued evil communications, during the many hours when no mother's eye is near to check the first breach of female honour, or mark the first unholy look ; or in the walk homewards, unguarded, amidst the contaminations of the idlers of the hamlet, or along the crowded street.

Or it may be from unkindness at home, where passions are so uncontrolled, or from want of discipline and restraint, so difficult to preserve among the poor in their unceasing round of daily toil, or from a fond parent's weakness, or a sinful parent's neglect, or mere blameless lack of prudence, the consequences of all which tell with such intensely aggravated force in the unguarded state of a labourer's home.

Or again from destitution, the burden of distress depressing all the moral energies of the soul, and breaking down the barriers of the grace of chastity, or the helplessness of the orphan and motherless, in the special difficulties which poverty must bring.

How quickly in such scenes, and amid such snares as these, will the early faults of wilfulness, or vanity, or secret passion hurry the young beyond the line of female safety, and then in an unwary hour, the weak compliance with some dazzling promise or heartless lie, in ignorance or heedlessness of what must follow, seals her destiny, and suddenly she awakes to feel that

she is the scorn of all, and must shun the light of day, and go and dwell where the darkest horrors ply their trade. All unconsciously perhaps there begins a course in which are gradually revealed the realities of a lot as horrible as imagination could picture among the damned.

It has been the continual sight of such misery close by our own homes, and in the sphere of my pastoral care, that has led us to form a retreat where penitents coming forth from those depths of debasement may share, if it be possible, the merits and virtues of the all-sufficient Sacrifice of the Cross, which is *our* only hope, and is surely *their's* also. There is a haunt within my parish, such as alas ! is not uncommonly found in the suburbs of our towns, whither, as to a sink of shame flow in from all the villages around, and from the great city, the outcasts of many a saddened home. They stray away from the scenes of their childhood, and are lost amidst the crowd which wanders through our lanes and courts. My frequent walk is among sights of degraded womanhood, which, God grant, may never darken the hearth of any one of you. A few years ago God stirred in the hearts of some who dwelt in the spot referred to, a desire to flee from their sins, and at the same time He awakened in one of His servants who lived hard by a longing to save the sinner. There was a lady who received into her own home those penitents ; within three days, six ; within a month fifteen. Thus arose the House of Mercy, within sight of the abode of vice ; that “ where sin abounded, there grace should much more abound.” From that hour to this present, it has grown upon this foundation. There was no design, no theory, nothing of our own mind. Enlarging, the work has taken a settled form in the same spirit.

It has been unbought love winning to Him Who is Love, the fruits of His redemption, disentangling the thorns which had fastened around and torn the lost sheep, smoothing the roughness of the way of the cross, and rejoicing in their return within the fold.

In the recovery of the lost it has been marvellous to see what affections have been drawn forth, what efforts after self-control have been made, what restraints patiently borne, what a change has come over the countenance, stamping on the outward features the influences which had been breathed over the inward life. A marvel and a blessing it has been to watch how hearts so withered, which had never believed that pure, disinterested love could exist in human breasts, have melted at the touch of those who sought them in CHRIST's compassion.

For as we have learnt from CHRIST the hope that such sinners may be saved, so have we learnt the true means by which the work is to be done. He taught us by His own example the effectual way to reach such sinners' hearts: it was by His self-sacrifice and love. He stooped from heaven to reach them. He sat down with them to share the sinners' meal. "As JESUS sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with Him and His disciples."¹ He stooped down to still lower depths of shame and suffering. He "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."² He gave up all for love of those whom He

¹ S. Matt. ix. 10.

² Philip. ii. 6—8.

sought to save, and mingled amongst them, and became as one of them, and thus constrained them to love Him. He the All-pure, yielded Himself to mingle with the impure ; He Whose Name is Love, gave Himself for those whose hearts had become most basely selfish, and thus both won them to Himself, and raised them to the consciousness of a higher and purer life.

And this manifestly is an eternal law affecting the salvation of souls. It is undeniably an example which must reverently be borne in mind by all who would win souls, and according to our measure, at however vast a distance, be copied. And herein a great defect in our old Penitentiaries is made evident ; for there has been in them a lack of this self-sacrifice and personal love. The work has been too often done merely as a hired service. They who serve in them are scarcely in a position to represent to the penitent CHRIST's love, nor to say, without risk of being gainsaid, " We come to you in the love of God, and for your soul's sake only." The penitent cannot so surely feel " for love of me and for CHRIST, not for themselves, they labour." There is not the direct appeal of love to love. There is danger lest the great principle of the first drawing of the soul be not put forth, and lest the sinner rise not to the contemplation of the love of CHRIST in CHRIST Himself : for they whom she sees, as between God and her, bear in their office and ministering but a dimmed reflection of His Image in this which is His special mode of winning hearts.

It is this which distinguishes the House of Mercy from our older Penitentiaries. If to live amongst such fallen ones, labouring for them day and night, with unbought love to save them from their sins, and from themselves, in order to present them before the Throne in the presence of all the holy angels, rejoicing over

each one that repenteth, constitutes a claim on your sympathy and aid ; such a ground of appeal may be urged most undoubtedly in this case.

And must not such an appeal come with a very personal feeling to every one of us on one ground or another. Such as have been brought up in pure and joyous homes, where a holy modesty has ever found the seclusion which it loved, where the young heart has known no blighting, and its first fond affections have been sanctified and sealed by a blessing from above, and who owe they know not how much, to safeguards cast around them, not of their own choosing, but of His love Who orders all our lots in life,—such may feel a pity for those who perhaps have fallen, because, as they grew up, they had no such watchful shelter.

So likewise the parent who by God's infinite mercy has been spared the bitterness of a daughter's fall, on whose lineage no spot of infamy has ever come, may compassionate those whose trials and difficulties they never experienced, and who, had *their* lot been cast in a more favoured sphere, would perhaps equally have been spared such misery.

And again, some there may be whose consciences are stirred with the remembrance of the sins of their youth, who have upon their souls the same guilt as those for whom I plead, but have escaped their utter degradation ; some one perhaps there may be, who even has lured into the fatal snare one who but for him had never known such infamy :—of such, surely we may ask an act of restitution, for without restitution, where it may be had, repentance is vain, and such an offering may return in blessing, if not on the very partners of their crime, yet on other members of that doomed

class, for whom, so often much more sinned against than sinning, this one, and only means of restoration now remains.

For surely "God is righteous in all His ways," and "the judgments of the LORD are true." There can be no inequalities in *His* dispensations, Who "is no respecter of persons." And though, for the most part, on woman only fall with such instant speed the terrible consequences of her guilt, there must be judgments in store for those also who have shared the same guilt,—a fellowship of retribution, as there has been a fellowship of impurity,—judgments suspended awhile, that other laws of His Providence may have their course, but to be manifested in that day when God will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness," and every unrepented sin shall have its full recompense. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they *follow after*."¹ The sins of youth may seem to have passed away—no trace left, save upon the memory,—and since their days of evil, the guilty may have drawn around them the circle of a happy home, and in its happiness forget the misery which has fallen upon those no more guilty than themselves. But the impunities of social life can give no security against Heaven's unerring retributions. Subsequent abstinence from evil is no atonement for former guilt. The flight of years cannot put away sins; if unabsolved, uncleansed in the virtues of the atoning Blood of the Lamb, they live on where sleep in awful silence the final judgments of an offended God. Blessed be His Name, those final judgments may be averted; but infinite mercy cannot lessen the demands of perfect justice. God surely looks for restitution. Sins against

¹ 1 Tim. v. 24.

Himself He freely remits, and herein we can offer no amends to satisfy His justice. Sins towards our fellow-creatures, He remits as freely ; but herein we may often give, and where we can, He requires us to give “restitution and satisfaction to the uttermost of our power;” and to check the vice, and heal the misery in which oneself may have borne a part, is a meet offering, which will be accepted of God, not as though it could win pardon, but as the late amends of penitence, from one who did what he could.

Oh ! that we may all feel more deeply the dreadfulness of sin, and the nearness of our danger, and the mercy of our escape, and the blessing of rekindled hope, and the value of souls in His eye, Who will have the house swept even for the one piece of silver, from which the Image of its LORD is not yet wholly erased, and Who even where it is altogether obliterated, yearns to recreate afresh “after the same Image in righteousness and true holiness;” that Image in which it is our hope to stand before Him at the Last Day ; and that, in the grateful consciousness of His forgiveness and renewed love, we may run the way of His commandments, and accomplish the good works which He hath prepared for us to walk in, in love to others, as we have been freely loved of Him ; that so, in that day when He maketh up His jewels, He may own us as among those in whom the purposes of His love have been fulfilled, and the travails of His own Soul satisfied ; to Whom, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be now and ever all glory and thanksgiving, &c., &c.

AN APPEAL

FOR THE

HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER.

Lent, 1856.

To those who are interested in Church Penitentiaries and Sisterhoods, this appeal is addressed. The House of Mercy for the recovery of fallen women has been established amidst many difficulties, although largely prospered, and the greater portion of the intended designs is finished; but we urgently require help at this present time, for we are pressed by the liabilities still remaining on the new buildings, and by the need of completing what we have begun. We ask of those who are enabled and kindly disposed to aid us, that they would aid us now by giving, or collecting *each the sum of £10*. If *three hundred and fifty persons* undertake to give this aid, our work may before long be completed. We are encouraged to make this appeal from the blessing which has hitherto rested on the House of Mercy, and which is marked by the following facts in our past progress.

First, as to our financial state. We commenced this work suddenly, without any preparation, in a house lent only for six months, trusting to aid, from day to day. In laying the foundations of every work of any magnitude, there is much of the outlay which never appears above ground; but the main of the expenditure has been as follows:—Two houses were successively occupied, after the first which was lent, and both these had to be fitted for the purpose, at a considerable cost. A permanent site was then purchased, being a freehold estate of fifteen acres, at a cost of £2300. The grounds around the house have been fenced, drained, and laid out for recreation; dairy-farm stocked, &c. Lastly, the New Buildings just completed have been raised at a

cost of about £6500. This may seem a large outlay for the purpose, but those who have examined the buildings and know our requirements, have not thought that there has been any unnecessary expenditure. There has been running on, at the same time, a current expenditure of maintaining a household of about thirty persons, year after year, for upwards of six years.

Secondly, as to the vital point of the living agency for carrying on the work. It was commenced by a single individual, who, for six months and upwards, had no fellow-workers. For the next year and a half, there was only the precarious help of occasional visitors. Gradually a settled community has been formed, which now consists of nine Sisters. They are constituted, according to legally constructed statutes, and by Episcopal sanction, into a corporate body, as a recognised instrument of the work of the Church of God. They support themselves on their own independent means, and carry on the entire management and care of the House with only a few subordinate helpers serving without wages.

Thirdly, as to the truth and permanence of the principles on which the House has been founded. Its principles were, at the commencement, known only in the appeals of the chief leader of the movement. They have since made such way, that they are now recognised and upheld by a Society which numbered, in the spring of 1854, 400 members, including fifteen Bishops, and which extends its operations throughout the entire sphere of the Church of England. Five other Houses have since been formed on the same principles, and are now cherished by this Society.

Lastly, as to the great and momentous object for which these efforts have been made—the success of our endeavours to recover the lost sheep of CHRIST's fold. The Clergymen and Sisters alike who here entered upon this work were obliged to do so without any previous experience whatever. The old precedents scarcely applied to what was intended to be carried out in dutiful observance of the Church's system and by a higher kind of service. We have had to form our own views, learn minute details, and test every rule by our own actual experience. The work has also suffered greatly, up to this time, from the very inconvenient internal arrangement of houses, which only with difficulty were at all made available for the purpose, and where there could be no classification, or even temporary separation for testing the cases admitted. We calculate, however, that out of eighty cases who have left after

being for a longer or shorter period under our care, there are fifty doing well in the world, with a large proportion of whom intercourse from time to time is kept up. We look on these as the first-fruits of a large harvest of souls, over even one of whom repenting there is joy among the angels of God.

When it is considered that this progress has been made in the course of six years and a half, we may well thank God and take courage. We cannot but recognise His hand blessing the work ; may we not venture, therefore, to ask for aid, to finish it.

Our immediate need is to clear off the liabilities upon the Buildings already completed and occupied ; and then to build the remaining wing, which contains the Sisters' chief rooms, the department for Penitents of a higher grade, additional Probationary rooms, the Chapel, and the Infirmary. £3500 will enable us, we trust, to complete the work.

We are earnestly desirous to complete it without delay for many reasons. The pressure for the admission of Penitents is so great that we have constantly the pain of rejecting urgent cases. One crying want especially, which has never anywhere as yet been supplied,—a separate department for Penitents of a higher grade, cannot be met till the remaining wing is built. The completion of the Sisters' rooms is also very urgent, for at present they are occupying rooms intended for the Penitents, and both their efficiency is marred, and the privacy which they need, when not actually employed, is unattainable for want of the rooms intended for them.

We trust, then, for the love of souls, that this our appeal will not be rejected ; and that in the same spirit in which the work is being carried on, those who can help us will join with us in an *association of prayer and alms* for a time, till the work be accomplished.

If the question should ever cross the mind,—is so large an outlay, and so elaborately constructed a system, necessary for such an object?—an answer is suggested in the words used by the Lord Bishop of Oxford at the last meeting of the Church Penitentiary Association in London :—

“It has been objected that more has been done for reclaiming a few of the lost ones of CHRIST than has been done for a great number of the unfallen. This is the one recurring thought which tends to weaken our efforts. It is, in one shape or another, the taunt which has been thrown out against the Penitentiary move-

ment, and it takes the form of an accusation that the promoters of it are influenced by a spurious, sickly, and morbid benevolence. No one who is engaged in this work has failed to suffer from the paralyzing influence of this suspicion; and, therefore, it is well that there should be settled in the minds of all what is the true and thoroughly sufficient answer to the question. The simple answer is that it is the will of GOD, marked upon the entire dispensation, of which we are parts, that there should be the necessity of greater labour to bring back to the fold those who could be saved, rather than to preserve those who, through the grace of GOD, had not fallen. It is that which stands written, as with the finger of GOD, in the history of man's redemption. Let those who misgive their motives reflect upon what GOD, in His marvellous tenderness, has done for man; because what limit was there to the power of GOD when man fell into sin? and why might He not then have called into existence countless worlds peopled with unfallen creatures? But, instead of this, the Eternal SON died for us upon a cross, and went through the whole of that costly apparatus by which man became rescued from his fall. Therefore, those who hope to share hereafter in the beatitude of CHRIST should not suffer such a thought to subdue them; because, stamped upon every thought of our own is the thought that to raise the fallen and to save the sinner was sufficient to bring down from heaven the co-eternal SON of GOD to hang upon the cross at Calvary. Nothing so much tends to put matters in their true light as to go straight to the great truth, that when they labour to restore a few unfortunate beings from the unspeakable misery in which sin has reduced them, they are but following the distinct type of GOD's love for mankind in the redemption of man through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

N.B. Any who are kindly drawn to unite in making the effort here urged will be thankfully supplied with any number of papers they may require, to assist in forwarding this object, by applying to the undersigned.

THOMAS T. CARTER.

Clewer Rectory, Windsor.

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